

General Information

The Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) tournament monitoring program consists of two distinct components. These are: 1) registration, and 2) reporting. Registration is required to annually identify all active HMS tournaments. Tournament reporting provides specific information that may be used in stock assessment programs.

A **tournament** is defined as “any fishing competition involving Atlantic HMS in which participants must register or otherwise enter, or in which a prize or award is offered for catching or landing such fish.”

A **tournament operator** means a person or entity responsible for maintaining records of participants and results for tournaments conducted from a port in an Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico coastal state, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, regardless of whether fish are retained.

Tournament Registration

How do I know if I need to register my tournament with NMFS?

All tournament operators must notify the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the purpose, dates, and location of any fishing tournament involving Atlantic highly migratory species ***at least four weeks prior*** to commencement of the tournament.

Atlantic HMS include:

- Atlantic Billfish (blue & white marlin, sailfish)
- Tunas (bluefin, yellowfin, skipjack, albacore, & bigeye)
- Sharks (large coastal, small coastal, & pelagic)
- Swordfish

How do I register my tournament?

Please call the Southeast Regional Office, HMS Management Division at (727) 824-5399 to obtain a registration form, or click on “Reporting Forms” at:

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms

or click on “Tournaments” at

www.hmspermits.gov

HMS Tournament operators must submit the completed registration form to NMFS’ HMS Management Division at the address indicated on the form or FAX it to (727) 824-5398 ***at least four weeks prior*** to the commencement of the tournament. NMFS will mail a confirmation number to the operator’s address. Registration is not considered complete unless the operator has received a confirmation number from the HMS Management Division.

What information do I need to supply when registering a HMS tournament?

Information requested on the registration form includes:

- Tournament name
- Location (city and state)
- Date of tournament
- Operator name and contact information
- All HMS for which points or prizes are awarded
- A copy of the tournament brochure and tournament rules, if they are available

Tournament Participation

HMS tournament participants must possess either an HMS Angling, HMS Charter/Headboat, or Atlantic Tunas General category permit. Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders are prohibited from fishing under HMS Angling category regulations except when participating in a registered HMS tournament. When fishing in a registered HMS tournament, Atlantic Tunas General category permit holders must comply with HMS angling category regulations for swordfish, sharks and billfish, and General category regulations for Atlantic tunas.

Tournament Reporting

How will I know if my tournament has been selected for reporting?

NMFS’ Southeast Fisheries Science Center will notify HMS tournament operators in writing if their tournament has been selected for reporting. If a tournament is selected, a reporting form and instructions will be sent to the operator.

What tournament information needs to be reported to NMFS?

Selected tournament operators must maintain and submit a record of catch and effort on the forms provided by NMFS. In addition, billfish tournament operators must submit radio logs or catch certificates containing capture information including: fishing hours, name of all boats fishing that day, bait types, fight times for all billfish captured or released, and weight, length, and sex of each fish brought ashore.

Where do I send the completed tournament reporting forms?

Tournament operators must submit the completed forms to NMFS' Southeast Fisheries Science Center at the address indicated on the reporting form, postmarked no later than seven days after the conclusion of the tournament.

Why are tournament registration and reporting necessary?

Tournament registration and reporting are a critical component of the HMS monitoring program. The collected information is used to estimate tournament fishing effort and landings of HMS for stock assessments, national and international reports, and other monitoring efforts.

What are the new Atlantic billfish tournament circle hook requirements?

Billfish tournament circle hook requirements have been suspended from May 11, 2007 – December 31, 2007, to allow anglers time to become proficient with circle hooks and familiar with their benefits. During this period, J-hooks may be used by billfish tournament anglers with any hook and bait combination. Beginning January 1, 2008, all HMS permitted vessels participating in Atlantic billfish tournaments must deploy only non-offset circle hooks when using natural baits or natural bait/artificial lure combinations.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/
www.hmspermits.gov

1-727-824-5399 (Southeast HMS Office)
1-301-713-2347 (HMS Headquarters)
1-888-872-8862 (HMS Permits)

Join Atlantic HMS Email News by subscribing at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/newslist/>

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Tournament Registration and Reporting



National Marine Fisheries Service
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species Management Division

This pamphlet summarizes HMS tournament registration and reporting requirements, as of October 2006. For the complete and official set of regulations, see 50 CFR part 635 and the Federal Register, or call the Highly Migratory Species Management Division at 301-713-2347. Since fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize themselves with the latest complete regulations and are responsible for complying with current official regulations. If there is a discrepancy between the regulations in 50 CFR part 635 and this brochure, the regulations will take precedence. This brochure is produced in compliance with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.